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## Construction jobs inch closer to pre-recession high

By Julie Strickland



*A new home under construction*

Employment in New York City's construction sector last year topped 120,000 for the first time since 2009, and wages rose as well, according to a report from the New York Building Congress.

Construction employment averaged 120,900 in 2013, up 4.2 percent from 116,000 in 2012. The momentum held nearly steady into the first quarter of 2014, a time when employment is typically at its slowest, with the number of jobs falling slightly to 116,200 year-over-year from 116,500.

The specialty trades sector, which also includes jobs like plumbers and electricians, accounted for 79,000 jobs last year — a 5.4 percent increase from the year prior. Building construction workers accounted for 32,900 jobs — a 3.1 percent year-over-year increase — while heavy construction and civil engineering posts amounted to 9,000 jobs, down 2 percent from 2012.

Despite the growth, the industry average remains 8.3 percent below a 2008 peak of 131,800 jobs.

“The employment numbers for 2013 are very encouraging,” Richard Anderson, president of the Building Congress, said in a release. “If the most recent Building Congress forecast for construction is on target, we should expect to see industry employment back in the 130,000 range by 2015.”

Construction worker wages were also on the rise last year, with those in the private sector seeing pay lift 1.6 percent to \$51,999 for the first nine months of 2013, the latest period for which data are available.